

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented): A credit card system, comprising:
 - means for maintaining a pool of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;
 - means for assigning at least one credit card number from said pool of credit card numbers to be a master credit card number;
 - means for assigning at least one credit card number from said pool of credit card numbers to be a limited-use credit card number;
 - means for associating said at least one limited-use credit card number with limited-use conditions, said conditions including permitting multiple uses and a use-triggered condition, the occurrence of which causes deactivation of said limited-use credit card number; and
 - means for associating said master credit card number with said limited-use credit card number, while ensuring that said master credit card number cannot be discovered on the basis of said limited-use credit card number.
2. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 1, further comprising:
 - means for receiving notification that said limited-use credit card number has been used in a credit card transaction;

means for determining whether a use-triggered condition has occurred based on said notification, and if so, generating a deactivation command; and

means for deactivating said limited-use credit card if said use-triggered condition has occurred.

3. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 2, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used a predetermined number of times.

4. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 2, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used to accrue charges which are greater than a prescribed monetary amount.

5. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 2, further comprising:

means for assigning another limited-use credit card number in response to said deactivation command, and associating said other limited-use credit card number with said master credit card number.

6. (Original): The credit card system of claim 5, wherein said system maintains a queue of available limited-use credit card numbers, and said means for assigning said other limited-use credit card number selects said other limited-use credit card number from said queue.

7. (Original): The credit card system of claim 1, further comprising means for receiving a request for another limited-use credit card number from a user, and in response thereto, assigning another limited-use credit card number.

8. (Original): The credit card system of claim 7, wherein said system maintains a queue of available limited-use credit card numbers, and said other limited-use credit card number is selected from said queue.

9. (Original): The credit card system of claim 1, wherein said system includes transmission means for downloading said limited-use credit card number to a user.

10. (Original): The credit card system of claim 9, wherein said limited-use credit card number is encrypted prior to downloading.

11. (Original): The credit card system of claim 1, wherein said system includes dispensing means for dispensing a credit card containing said limited-use credit card number to a user.

12. (Original): The credit card system of claim 11, wherein said dispensing means comprises an automated teller machine.

13. (Original): The credit card system of claim 11, wherein said dispensing means comprises a printing means for printing out an indication of said limited-use credit card number for delivery to said user.

14. (Previously Presented): A computer-readable medium having embodied thereon a computer program executable on a computer for implementing for a credit card system comprising:

maintaining a pool of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;

assigning at least one credit card number from said pool of credit card numbers to be a master credit card number;

assigning at least one credit card number from said pool of credit card numbers to be a limited-use credit card number;

associating said at least one limited-use credit card number with limited-use conditions, said conditions including permitting multiple uses and a use-triggered condition, the occurrence of which causes deactivation of said limited-use credit card number; and

associating said master credit card number with said limited-use credit card number, while ensuring that said master credit card number cannot be discovered on the basis of said limited-use credit card number.

15. (Previously Presented): A computer program resident in physical signals transmitted over a transmission medium, said computer program executable on a computer for use in a credit card computer system, comprising:

maintaining a pool of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;

assigning at least one credit card number from said pool of credit card numbers to be a master credit card number;

assigning at least one credit card number from said pool of credit card numbers to be a limited-use credit card number;

associating said at least one limited-use credit card number with limited-use conditions, said conditions including permitting multiple uses and a use-triggered condition, the occurrence of which causes deactivation of said limited-use credit card number; and

associating said master credit card number with said limited-use credit card number, while ensuring that said master credit card number cannot be discovered on the basis of said limited-use credit card number.

16. (Canceled).

17. (Previously Presented): A credit card system for performing a credit card transaction based on one of a master credit card number or a limited-use credit card number, wherein said limited-use credit card number is randomly chosen with respect to said master credit card number, but said limited-use credit card number includes identical formatting to said master credit card number and is associated with said master credit card number, said system comprising:

transaction means for entering a transaction on the basis of said master credit card number or said limited-use credit card number to generate a transaction message;

processing means for receiving said transaction message and processing said transaction, including:

means for authorizing or denying said transaction;

means for determining whether to deactivate the limited-use credit card number when said limited-use credit card number was used to perform the transaction, and for generating a deactivation command in response thereto, wherein said means for determining whether to deactivate the limited-use credit card number determines whether a use-triggered condition associated with permitted use of said limited-use credit card number has occurred, and if so, generates said deactivation

command when said limited-use event has occurred, and if not, does not generate said deactivation command; and

means for deactivating the limited-use credit card number based on the deactivation command.

18. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 17, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used only once.

19. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 17, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used to accrue charges which are greater than a prescribed monetary amount.

20. (Currently Amended): A method for performing a credit card transaction based on one of a master credit card number or a limited-use credit card number, ~~wherein said limited-use credit card number having no mathematical relationship with respect to with said master credit card number~~, but said limited use credit card number includes identical formatting to said master credit card number and is associated with said master credit card number, said method comprising:

entering a transaction on the basis of said master credit card number or said limited-use credit card number, wherein said limited-use credit card number having no mathematical relationship with respect to with said master credit card number, to generate a transaction message;

receiving said transaction message and processing said transaction, including:

authorizing or denying said transaction;

determining whether to deactivate the limited-use credit card number when said limited-use credit card number was used to perform the transaction, and generating a deactivation command in response thereto, wherein said determining step determines whether a use-triggered condition associated with permitted use of said limited-use credit card number has occurred, and if so, generates said deactivation command, and if not, does not generate said deactivation command; and

deactivating the limited-use credit card number based on the deactivation command.

21. (Currently Amended): A credit card system, comprising:
a database of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;
a master credit card number selector that can select at least one credit card number from said database to be a master credit card number;

a limited-use credit card number selector that can select a least one credit card number from said database to be a limited-use credit card number that is deactivated upon a use-triggered condition subsequent, wherein said condition includes permitting multiple uses and said limited-use credit card number is generated by a random, pseudo-random or algorithmic process;

a credit card number processor that can associate said master credit card number with said limited-use credit card number, while ensuring that said master credit card number cannot be discovered on the basis of said limited-use credit card number;

a credit card number distributor that can send said limited-use credit card number to a user associated with said master credit card number; and

means for receiving information from said user, said information specifying limited uses for the limited-use credit card number, said uses including said use-triggered condition.

Claims 22-27. (Canceled).

28. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 1, wherein at least one of said limited use conditions is one or more selected from a group consisting of a specific time period, a specific merchant, a specific group of merchants, a specific type of transaction, and a specific number of transactions.

29. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 1, comprising:
means for delivering said limited-use credit card number to a user associated with said master credit card number; and

means for receiving information from said user designating at least one of said limited-use conditions.

30. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 29, wherein said means for delivering comprises transmission means for downloading said limited-use credit card number to the user.

31. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 1, wherein said limited-use conditions include limiting the limited-use credit card number to a predetermined number of payments for a transaction with a single merchant.

32. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 1, wherein a card issuer specifies at least one of said limited-use conditions.

33. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 1, wherein a card user specifies at least one of said limited-use conditions.

34. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 21, wherein said specified use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used only once.

35. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 21, wherein said specified limited uses permit multiple transactions until said use-triggered condition is satisfied.

36. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 21, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when charges accrued by the limited-use credit card number exceed at least one predetermined threshold selected from a total single charge, total charges over a limited time period, and total charge in a single transaction.

37. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 21, wherein said specified limited uses include limiting the limited-use credit card number to transactions with a single merchant.

38. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 21, wherein said specified limited uses include limiting the limited-use credit card number to transactions with a specific merchant as determined by first use.

39. (Currently Amended): A credit card system, comprising:

means for maintaining a pool of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;

means for assigning a number of said credit card numbers from said pool to be master credit card numbers;

means for assigning a number of said credit card numbers from said pool to be limited-use credit card numbers, each of which are designated to be deactivated upon a use-triggered condition, wherein said condition includes permitting multiple uses;

means for maintaining a first queue of the limited-use credit card numbers, each available for association with one of the assigned master credit card numbers;

means for maintaining a second queue containing assigned master credit card numbers requiring association with limited-use credit card numbers; and

means for associating, for each master credit card number at the front of the second queue, one or more limited-use credit card numbers from the first queue, wherein said one or more limited-use credit card numbers associated with a same master credit card at different times when the same master credit card number reaches the front of the second queue are random with respect to one another.

40. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 39, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used only once.

41. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 39, wherein said limited-use credit card number is designated for multiple uses until said use-triggered condition is satisfied.

42. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 39, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when charges accrued by the limited-use credit card number exceed at least one predetermined threshold selected from a total single charge, total charges over a limited time period, and total charge in a single transaction.

43. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 39, wherein said limited-use credit card is limited to transactions with a single merchant.

44. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 39, wherein said limited-use credit card number is limited to transactions with a specific merchant as determined by first use.

45. (Previously Presented): A method of implementing a credit card system, comprising:

- maintaining a pool of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;

- assigning a number of said credit card numbers from said pool to be master credit card numbers;

- assigning a number of said credit card numbers from said pool to be limited-use credit card numbers, each of which are designated to be deactivated upon a use-triggered condition;

- maintaining a first queue of the limited-use credit card numbers each available for association with one of the plurality of master credit card numbers;

- maintaining a second queue containing ones of said master credit card numbers users requiring association with limited-use credit card numbers; and

associating, for each master credit card number at the front of the second queue, one or more limited-use credit card numbers from the first queue, wherein said one or more limited-use credit card numbers associated with a same master credit card at different times when the same master credit card number reaches the front of the second queue are random with respect to one another.

46. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 45, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when said limited-use credit card is used only once.

47. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 45, wherein said limited-use credit card number is designated for multiple uses until said use-triggered condition is satisfied.

48. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 45, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when charges accrued by the limited-use credit card number exceed at least one predetermined threshold selected from a total single charge, total charges over a limited time period, and total charge in a single transaction.

49. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 45, comprising limiting said limited-use credit card to transactions with a single merchant.

50. (Previously Presented): The method of claim 45, comprising limiting said limited-use credit card number is to transactions with a specific merchant as determined by first use.

51. (Currently Amended): A credit card system, comprising:

a database of credit card numbers which share identical formatting;

a master credit card number assigner for assigning at least one credit card number from said database to be a master credit card number;

a limited-use credit card number assigner for assigning a least one credit card number from said database to be a limited-use credit card number, which is designated to be limited to one or more limited uses;

a credit card number processor for associating said master credit card number with said limited-use credit card number, while ensuring that said master credit card number cannot be discovered on the basis of said limited-use credit card number, wherein the limited-use credit card numbers are generated by a random, pseudo-random or algorithmic process; and

a receiving unit for receiving information from a user of said master credit card, said information defining at least one said limited use of said limited-use credit card number, before using said limited use card number in a transaction pertaining to said defined limited use.

52. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 51, wherein said defined limited use limits use of said limited-use credit card to only one use.

53. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 51, wherein said defined limited use designates said limited-use credit card number for multiple uses until deactivation upon occurrence of a use-triggered condition.

54. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 53, wherein said use-triggered condition is satisfied when charges accrued by the limited-use credit card number exceed at least one predetermined threshold selected from a

total single charge, total charges over a limited time period, and total charge in a single transaction.

55. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 51, wherein said defined limited use limits use of the limited-use credit card to transactions with a single merchant.

56. (Previously Presented): The credit card system of claim 51, wherein said defined limited use limits use of the limited-use credit card to transactions with a specific merchant as determined by first use.